

March 3, 2022

In support of Bill 5283

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for Bill #5283 which secures equal funding for Agriscience/Agriculture Education.

My son is currently enjoying his freshman year in the Suffield High School Agriscience program. Although our family does not have any agricultural experience, my son developed a strong interest in Animal Husbandry, Ag Mechanics, and Environmental Sciences at a young age. When he attended the virtual open house last year he exclaimed, "I HAVE to go to that school!". He applied and was accepted into the program based on his 4H experience and his history of being an exemplary student. He was ecstatic!

We then learned via word of mouth that despite being fully accepted, there was a very real chance that he may be told by his home district that he cannot attend due to limited funding. We were shocked to hear that the Agriscience programs are not being funded in the same way as all of the other Choice programs, and that accepted students are prohibited from attending as a result.

The possibility of not being able to attend the Agriscience program was devastating. We contacted our district and were relieved to find out that he was among the limited number of students that would be able to attend. My son came home from his first day in the Agriscience program with a huge smile and stated, "I'm so happy here. This is definitely where I belong." He has continued to flourish in this program and has maintained honor role to date.

I believe that all interested and eligible students should have access to the Agriscience programs in our state. Our Agriculture programs provide training, preparation, and experience for a wide variety of careers that play a critical role in our communities. To name just a few; We need farmers, crops, veterinarians, ag mechanics, welders, carpenters, florists, horticulturists, aquaculturists, and environmental scientists in order to survive and thrive as a society.

Bill 5283 would allow equal funding for all of our valuable vocational schools, including our Agriscience/Agriculture Education programs. This would ensure that none of our aspiring Agriculture students will have to give up on their dreams going forward. Likewise, equal funding would help prevent a shortage of trained professionals in these crucial areas in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,
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Resident of Enfield, CT